

NAME: Inouye, Sadame DATE OF BIRTH: 12/3/1888 PLACE OF BIRTH: Kochi  
Age: 83 Sex: M Marital Status: M Education: 8 years

PRE-WAR:  
Date of arrival in U.S.: 1906 Age: 18 M.S. S Port of entry: San Fran.  
Occupation/s: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of residence: 1. Stockton, Ca. 2. San Leandro, Ca. 3. Sacramento, Ca.  
Religious affiliation: Christian Church 4. Los Angeles, Ca. 5. Merced, Ca.  
Community organizations/activities: 6. Riverside, Ca. 7. Broderick, Ca.

## EVACUATION:

Name of assembly center: Merced Assembly Center (5/21/42-9/3/42)  
Name of relocation center: ?  
Dispensation of property: Friend's basement Names of bank/s: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jobs held in camp: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Jobs held outside of camp: \_\_\_\_\_  
Left camp to go to: Sacramento, California (In 1945)

## POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: September 22, 1945  
Address/es: 1. Sacramento, California 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Religious affiliation: Christian Church  
Activities: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: Deceased

Name of interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe Date: 12/1971 Place: Yuba City, Ca.

*Translator: Michio Yamaguchi*



Name: Sadame Inouye

Birth Date: Dec. 3, 1888

Birth Place: Kochi Hen

The time of entry into the States: 1906

How Old was he when he entered into the States: 18 years old

Major Occupation: Farmer

Camp:

Interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe  
Interview Date: Dec. 1971

Translator: Michiyo Yamaguchi  
Typist: Michiyo Yamaguchi



1. In Japan

Mr. Sadame Inouye. I was born on December 3, 1888, at Takaishimura, Takaoka-gun (Tosa-shi, Kōchi-ken curenly). My family were half-time farmers. We had stone-cutting business, too.

Sino-Japanese War - I was five or six years old at the time of the war. I remember some stories I heard from other people. I still remember a soldier's cap with holes of bullets.

Russo-Japanese War - Since it was ten years after the Sino-Japanese War, I was pretty aware of what was going on. However, I do not seem to remember anything particularly.

World War I - It was 1914, wasn't it? I did not go to the war, so I have nothing to talk about.

Manchurian event - I know the event, but I cannot tell when it was.

Happy events - Nothing in particular. I must have had an ordinary life.

Kantō earthquake - Though I did not experience it personally, I heard about the aftereffects of the earthquake such as a tidal wave and epidemic.

Religion - My family's religion was the Shingon Sect of Buddhism. The Shingon Sect is close to the Nichiren Sect and Zen Sect. The teacher of the Shingon Sect is Kōbō Taishi. I understand that there are quite a few believers of this sect in Shikoku more than any other part of Japan.

I heard a little about Christianity when I was little although I did not have any direct contact with Christians. No missionaries came to our town. I remember somebody told me that Christianity



would bring happiness to one's bosom when one passes away.

Education in Japan - I have about eight years of education.

III. See

## II. Leaving Japan

I left Japan for the United States in 1906. It was not so long after the Russo-Japanese War, that the country was poor and the Government encouraged people to go abroad to make money. I mean Hawaii by going abroad. At that time people went to Hawaii mostly. Those who could come to the mainland were either those who were invited to come or those who were specialists in certain fields and came here to research. In my case it was rather easy. I could come to the mainland after stopping over in Hawaii for two days because of the bad weather.

The reason why I came to this country was to make money. I had one brother and two sisters. I am the second but the oldest son. As my father had a debt, he sent me to this country to make money. I sacrificed myself for my father for the first ten years in the States. I paid all the debt back. At that time I took it for granted that a child would become a sacrifice of his own family although such a thing is almost /inconceivable today. My father seemed to have got into debt in one year when he failed in raising silkworms.

I was in Hawaii for two days. People at a Japanese inn on the island took care of paper work necessary to come to the mainland. They first asked us if we wanted to work in Hawaii or on the mainland. People from Kōchi-ken seldom worked on the island. We got our passports stamped in Hawaii and we were all set when we came to the mainland. It was easy to come to the United States, but we needed some money.



We took a boat named "Iminsen" (immigration ship) from Japan to Hawaii which, I think, was about 12,000 tons. There were three or four of this type of boats. From Hawaii we took a different boat, "Alameda" which was rather small. People who were aboard from Japan were mostly people like myself, who wanted to work here to make money. Most of the economy class passengers got off in Hawaii. I don't know the passengers of the first and second classes. On the ship we had a light play put up by crews once or twice as recreation. It took twelve days from Japan to Hawaii and another eight days from Hawaii to the West Coast.

### III. First Impression of America

I was not particularly surprised when I first landed. I just thought that America was a huge country. Different kinds of food, clothes, language, etc. did not bother me so much.

I thought San Francisco was a nice town since it was before the earthquake. The earthquake came after six months. Anti-Japanese feeling was prevalent at that time and kids used to throw rocks at us. I had to run away. There was no other way I could do. It happened frequently. Other Japanese, too, had this experience. It was really vexing, but I could not have gained upon them.

### IV. Settlement

I did not work in San Francisco. I just stayed over night there/ <sup>at an inn</sup> and the following day I took a boat down to an island near Stockton. A friend of mine gave me an address down there. When the owner of the inn knew where I was going, he said that it would be dangerous to go down there. I got to the place about midnight and spent the



night at an warehouse. I remember it was still pretty cold. I think it was about the middle of March. I was with another Japanese. Next morning we heard chicken, which made us realize that people were around. We were pleased and waited until the dawn. We met an Italian to whom we showed the address. He did not understand English either but took us to near-by Japanese camp although this was not the one we were supposed to go. In this camp we met some people we knew. They sent a messenger for us and we took a boat again to go to the other camp. Even within the island it was easier to go by boat.

Though I was seventeen, I did not particularly feel helpless. I did not any trouble with the Immigration Office. I got the passport and other papers in Hawaii before I came to the mainland.

I did not have any particular problem when I first came to this county. Most of the I was with other Japanese. I had a trouble with English only when I went shopping. It was really inconvenient.

In the first camp we worked in the onion field for a month or so. After that we did the work of ???? , which was managed by ???? After a month or so we went to a neighboring island and we had a job of digging potatoes. We used a boat to go around. It was about August when we finished up with digging potatoes. Then we came up to Sacramento for picking ???? , which was rather popular among the young. The work lasted until the middle of September. We went to pick grapes next. When I was picking grapes, I suffered from beriberi. My friend also had beriberi. We were hospitalized in a hospital managed by ????? in Sacramento. We were in the hospital for about a month. When we got well, we spent the New Year's Day at a camp on Riverside where my friend's friend was.



In spring everybody went to work. So I followed them although my legs were not strong enough. Our boss was kind and gave me an easy of getting rid of birds from the field using a rifle where the seeds of barley were just sown. While I was working on this, which was about the end of March, water started covering the island. The island where I was was the last one to be covered by water. We waited at an warehouse for four or five days, hoping that water would subside, but it never did. We decided to look for other jobs. We went to a Japanese camp in San Leandro. There we picked ??? and green peas, and planted tomatoes. Though my legs were still weak, I managed to work somehow. After a while I decided to go back to Sacramento since there was not much work left there. One friend, however, begged me not to leave, for he did not like to be left alone. It was about the end of June or July. This friend, myself and one other guy tried the work of chopping wood, which was rather an unusual work in midsummer.

For cherry trees, for instance, we could earn only fifty cents per tree after we chopped down the tree, dug the root up, cut the tree into pieces of certain size and piles them up. It was quite a job, but they paid just fifty cents per tree. Today nobody would do this. Though the pay was very meager, I could earn \$1.50 if I worked on three drees a day, which was equivalent to regular wage per day at that time. I did this work for a while and then came out to Sacramento.

It was about the fall. There was not any job around in Sacramento. A friend of mine who was playing around used to come to my place for dinner. I could not help feeding him although I did not like it. I asked him if he liked to work with me. He said that he would if I were coming along. We formed a new gang and went to Naples near



Santa Barbara as<sup>a</sup>/section gang for the railroad. There were somewhere between twelve and fifteen people in this gang. The weather was nice out there and the work was not so hard. However, we soon found that the rail was rolling so much that it was really dangerous to work on it. We asked our boss if he would pay us for the work we did for the first few days. The boss would not. Thus we ran away after three days. The boss was a Japanese. Two other young Japanese asked us if they could come along, and four of us left the camp together. The boss must have had a trouble in carrying on the work after we left. Finally we went down to Los Angeles. We worked in the area between Huntington Beach and Santa Ana for about half a year, cutting celeries (?). I cannot remember what they were doing, but there were many Japanese in that area. We had a so-called commission boss. He called us up the night before about where we were going to work tomorrow. We took lunch with us to the work. I had the New Year's Day down there that year. Before long the celery season came to the end. Then we went to ??? to pick oranges and lemons. Before I finished the work, I went to Gardena to help my friend. At that time there were strawberry fields in Gardena. When the strawberry season was over, I was asked to come to the mountain area in Venice. On the fairly large land a Japanese was growing barley, and potatoes, onions and corns in the intervals of barley. I worked for this guy for about half a year.

Marriage - I received a telegram from my family saying that my father was very sick. I went back to Japan right away. However, my father had already passed away before I got there since I had to go home by boat. I could not come back to the United States immediately.



While I was staying in Japan, I married to my present wife. It was 1917. It was eleven year after I left Japan. My wife came to the United States six months after I came back. She came to Riverside first and both of us worked there.

Did your wife go to the Los Angeles area with you? - No. It was not much after I came from Japan that I went to Los Angeles. I think it was 1907 or 1908.

In Japan most of the marriages at that time were arranged by parents or relatives and mine was, too. My friend's father arranged it for me. We did not go to the shrine nor temple for the ceremony. I remember that our go-between acted as a chairman at the party. He gave a short speech and we exchanged nuptial cups.

Your marriage was not so-called picture marriage. Do you remember any problems you heard about this kind of marriage? - I understand that there were quite a few problems. Since they did not see each other before marriage other than through picture, there must have been some unexpected things. I heard some cases in which they got separated or either wife or husband left the other partner.

Did you hear a case like this among your friends? - No, not among my friends.

Then, most of these marriages were successful, aren't they? - Yes, I think so.

Have you ever become homesick? - No, I did not become homesick much.

Did you receive any discrimination while you were working in the field here and there? No, not particularly. It was only in a town when somebody threw stones at me. San Francisco was particularly bad.

English - I did not have ~~any~~ time to learn English for the first



ten years. Later I went to school for a few months in winter when I could not work. I did this for a couple years.

I was in Stockton when I received the telegraph about my father's sickness. I was in southern California for the first couple years, and later I worked in the Stockton and Sacramento area although I did not go back to the island where I worked earlier. My income at that time was about a dollar fifty per day. This was not enough in winter when the job was scarce. In a regular camp we spent twenty cents for food. I guess we paid about twenty-five or thirty cents for our room per day. When I worked here and there, I stayed in the boarding house. In one house I remember that I paid fifty cents just for the room, although it was really nice one. Even when I ate at restaurants, I did not need more than twenty or twenty-five cents for food a day. I built a house by myself in 1919. It was the year after my wife came to the United States.

In 1919 we joined the Japanese settlement in Mercede, where I worked before when I was still single. The colony was started by Kyūtarō Abiko of the Nichibei. The colony had 2500 acres. It was 175 dollars per acre. With regard to the payment, we were supposed to put twenty percent downpayment which was thirty-five dollars and pay the rest for next eight years, which meant we made payment of \$17.50 every month. Thus, it was rather easy to buy a land. By the name of Mr. Abiko, the American bank took charge of selling the land. It looked easy to start but the problem was that we could not get many people interested in this. The other Japanese colony in Cortez(spel.?) was very successful, for they had a good manager. About thirty people participated in this colony, while we barely gathered six people. The number was too small to organize any cooperative unit like union.



If we had at least twenty, we could have made it. These six people left gradually one by one and finally we had to close the colony. I think that the failure was greatly due to the mismanagement by the manager. Mr. Shimanouchi who was the manager of other colony, was, in contrast, quite a hard worker and put his energy and efforts into the colony. His son was a consul ~~in~~ of Japanese Consulate in San Francisco. Mr. Abiko, our manager, was a capable newspaper man, but he was selfish and did not do a good job of management. He even talked in such a way as it would discourage people from buying rather than encourage them to buy the land. Thus, we could not get many people and the colony failed completely. Those who put downpayment had to give it up. If we paid all, we could have got the land. Thirty-five dollars of downpayment was big money at that time, which was about equal to one's income for a month. We stayed at Mercede for six years grudgingly since we built our house there. There were still a few people when we left finally. I do not know how much longer they stayed in the colony, but they, too, must have ran away. We grew vegetables first but we could not find a good market for them. It was because that our produce was limited with only six people.

Q. Did Japanese Consulate, Kenjin Kai or other associations provide any financial help to you? - No, not at all. When we had a flood in 1955, some people from Kenjin Kai and ministers from the Presbyterian Church and the Seventh Day Adventist Church came to help us and gave us blankets, etc. Some individual members of the Buddhist Church sent some donations to us, but we did not get any help directly from the Buddhist Church. The relief center was established in the Buddhist Church and people throughout the country sent their donations to the center. All the money was divided up by all the people who suffered from the flood. According to my diary, I received forty-six dollars. This flood occurred just before Christmas, so there was not any Christmas



for us.

Q. What did you do in your leisure time? - We did not have any recreational thing particularly. I did not play Go nor Shōgi much. I like to read and do Noh recitation. (Yōkyoku) Noh recitation has been my hobby for the last ten years. I do not play any musical instrument. I just sing.

Q. Where was your first child born? - It was in Stockton when we were growing onions. So it was before we joined the colony in Mercede.

Q. What kind of things were you worried about your children? - When my children were at school age, we tried to live near school whenever we moved.

Q. Did you send your children to Japan? - No, we did not. I have five children; two sons and three daughters.

Q. Did you have any reason why you did not send any of your children to Japan? - Not particularly although we could not afford it. Besides I did not particularly like to send them to Japan. I understand that those who could afford sent their children to Japan to get education.

Q. Were you in this country at the time of World War I? - Yes, I was working on the farm here and there, carrying my own blanket with me although there were boarding houses where I could stay. It was about 1914. I remember that in 1914 the <sup>Japanese</sup> Presbyterian Church was established in Sacramento for the first time. I was not a member of the church at that time, but the Japanese man I worked with ~~was~~ ~~very influential~~ influenced me greatly. Every Sunday he asked me to go to church with him. So I did. This friend is now a minister



of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. One Japanese I know id a great service for the church. His name was Tokunaga Tomotarō. He was a tailor from San Francisco. After a while he closed up his tailor business in Sacramento and went back to his friend's in San Francisco. I think he was sick. He died rather young. Mr. Tokunaga and other guy, Mr. Miyoshi, had a house in Riverside before the war worked with great efforts for the church. Mr. Miyoshi not only went to church every Sunday for the service but he also engaged in mission work in his home for younger Japanese. For the older church members I can remember Mr. Miyagawa who had his drug store, but I seldom saw him at church. Another person I can remember is Mr. Aoki. I saw him occassionally at church. ???????

Mr. Iijima joined much later. He came from San Francisco. Mr. Fujiwara was not around yet. Mr. Satoh was an ardent member. Whenever I went to church, I always found him there. I guess he must have been the most ardent member of the church.

Q. Who was a minister at that time? - Mr. Nakamura was a minister when the church was established. I do not remember how long he was with the church. Later a minister whose name is something like Mr. Ashina replaced ~~Rev.~~ Nakamura. I never saw this minister since I was away from Sacramento for a while. The first minister we had was ~~Rev.~~ Nakamura. When ~~Mr.~~ Rev. and Mrs. Nakamura were in Sacramento, I became intimate with them and went to visit them frequently as if I were going my own home. In 1915 I went to San Francisco to live with an American family as a schoolboy for three months. Mr. Tokunaga, my best friend, wrote a letter to Mr. Kashiwada to whom Mr. Tokunaga sold his cleaner's store and asked if he could find a job for me. However, Mr. Kashiwada told Mr. Tokunaga that he



would be too busy to take care of me. Mr. Kashiwada is now a correspondent for a Japanese newspaper in Livingston. In San Francisco I got to know M Rev. Kimura who was a minister at the Japanese Presbyterian Church and later became a captain of the the Salvation Army. Rev. Kimura asked me if I was interested in becoming a member of his church. But I told him that I did not even know much about Christianity yet and besides I tended to wander from one place to another. At that time I attended their Bible study group every week, so the minister must have thought that I was really an ardent Christian. Since I liked to study, I joined the study group rather going to a service. Then I wrote a letter to Rev. Nakamura in Sacramento and asked his opinion. I also told him that I did not feel I committed any sin and that I would like to be baptized by him if I decided to do so. Rev. Nakamura replied immediately. He said in his letter that it was all right if I did not feel guilty and that John the Baptist baptized Christ but Christ did not try to have it particularly. He further said that we should do things for good reasons (for good purpose), and that we should do it because it is good. Thus I got baptized in 1915. The Japanese Presbyterian Church in Sacramento was like my home. But I was away from ~~Sacramento~~ Sacramento for a while, so I lost contact with the church. Rev. Nakamura's wife was also a very nice person. Even a person who was always sarcastic admitted that she had unusually good personality. She was really a wonderful person.

Q. Did you send your children to a Japanese language school? - No, I did not.



## V. Depression

After we failed in Mercede we moved to Riverside. I had to find a job somehow since we had five children. A friend of mine had a grocery store and usually had several Filipino and Japanese employees. So I asked him if I could work for him. He immediately said, "Yes" and even let me build a temporary house by his store. I built a small two bedroom house by myself. It costed me about three hundred dollars just for building materials.

Q. When did you decide to live in the United States permanently? - It was when we went to Mercede.

## VI. The Second World War

We were at Broaderick(?) near Sacramento when Pearl Harbor was attacked. I read it in Japanese newspaper.

Q. How did you feel when you knew it? - I felt that they did it.

Q. Did you expect them to do something like that? - I thought that someday they would bomb somewhere. I vaguely expected it.

Q. What kind of things happened after that? Did Caucasians attack you, for instance? - No, nothing like that happened to us.

Q. Did you go to Riverside first or Broaderick? - We went to Broaderick after Riverside. Broaderick is the last place before we went to the camp.

Q. Why did you move to Boaderick? - After three or four years at Riverside, the owner of that vegetable store decided to go back to Japan and sold his store to me. It was 1935. I managed the store for a year. Then the landlord sold the land, so I had to give it up. I would have made a lot of money if I could have the store for another year or so. I first looked for the land and found it near



Parkins(?). We moved our house ~~there~~ and started growing vegetables. However, the soil was very poor there. That was really the hardest time for my family. After a while we could find a land on Broaderick. I talked to the landlord about the problem we had and could move to Broaderick. We lived on Broaderick for six years until we were forced to evacuate. The land there was extremely damp and we again had a hard time. We were surprised to know what the damp land was like. Believe or not, the water spouted out of the land.

#### VII. Assembly Center and Relocation Center

Q. How did you feel when you knew that you had to go to the camp?  
 - I thought we could not help it. I was not particularly scared of it. In a way we were expected of it. We put our things in our car and went to a meeting place. There we got on buses and trucks prepared by the Government. They took us to the railroad station where we were put on a train and we were taken to the Mercede assembly center. My oldest boy said that he would go out and sell some of the things. Since we did not have anything expensive, we decided not. We knew a highschool teacher who had a big basement in his home, so he let us store things in his basement.

Q. What did you do with your property or business? - We left them as they were and later took proceedings for them. However, we got only about 10% of them. It was April or May when we left. We were about to harvest cabbages and strawberries but we had to give them up. We asked for the compensation later but we hardly got anything for them. We did not leave our things at the church nor at home as Caucasian neighbors. The assembly center was all right. We went there on May 21st and stayed there for three months. The housing



was temporary but it was OK.

Q. Did you have any problems in the center? - We had all kinds of rumors about Japan. Some said that Japan would attack the U.S. mainland or that Japan was winning the war, etc. We left the center on September 3rd and got to the relocation center on the fifth. According to my diary I seemed to have enjoyed the life in the camp. Since I did not need to work for a living, I had time to read or to do things I liked.

Q. Were there any problems concerning so-called loyalty oath? - No, there were not. I understnad that there were some problems at Tule Lake Center. In our camp we did not even write anything for the loyalty oath.

Q. How did the people respond when some young Japanese volunteered to the Army? - I heard people say that those who refused to go to the war should be taken out of the camp. I understand that at Tule Lake those who went to the war were discriminated against by others. Our camp was rather quiet on those things.

Q. How did you feel about the fact that you were forced to put in the camp because you were a Japanese? - I thought we could not help it since ~~WEREXWE~~ we were foreigners of an ~~x~~ enemy country. However, I thought it was not fair to put Nisei in the camp. My oldest son was just at the age to be drafted at that time. However, he had a







quickly. We soon needed a picking machine to harvest them, but there were not many machines available in the camp. One person approached me and told that he could borrow a machine in my name to harvest vegetables. It turned out that this guy deceived me because he himself wanted to get vegetables. The same guy also asked me if he could learn how to grow vegetables. I accepted him easily. He worked for about a week but soon showed a suspicious attitude. I really had a bad time with this person.

Q. Do you think that your religious faith helped you when faced with a trouble? - I cannot think of anything particularly.

#### VIII. Resettlement

We left the camp on September 22, 1945. We came back to Sacramento directly. Mr. Nakamura in <sup>CORTIZ</sup> Quortez(?) met us at the railroad station and invited us to his home. We stayed at \* his place for a while. Then we went to Camp Cola(?) where there were American soldiers, which was about twelve miles from Sacramento. There were about eighty people there. People with their families and small children had to live in this camp since they did not have anything. We stayed there for about three months. I worked at the laundry of the camp for American soldiers. In February a government official came to the camp and started arranging farming jobs for us. Meanwhile, Mr. Tanaka, who is my friend from the camp, told us that there was a room available in the house which he and his family rented. I think we stayed \* there for about ten months. While we were there, we found a tamato ranch in <sup>Bryte</sup> Dyke(?). It was near Yolo bypass. Our friend found the land there first. There were two 80 acre pieces of land. So the land was too large for one person but was just right for two of us to work on. We had a contract with Libby Company.



We were there for two years. In the third year we felt that we had to have our own house and we built this house here. I used the materials of the camp building and did all the furnishings myself. We had to build a at least four bedroom house since my oldest son and my two daughters did not have their homes although they were married except my oldest daughter. Before we moved into this house I stayed at the hotel which is the present Parkview Presbyterian Church for about two weeks. Most of the people staying at the hotel were not with their families. Like myself a lot of people came out first by themselves. The attitude of other Americans toward Japanese changed drastically after the war.

## IX. Conclusion

Q. What was the most difficult thing in your life? - The fact that we did not have a house was very hard ~~xxxxxx~~ for us. We came to the place where we thought we had to build one by any means. We needed a house from which we could go to work on a tomato ranch here and there. Therefore we bought this land first and then built a house. It was 1949.

Q. What is your hope now? - My oldest son goes to the Buddhist Church while my two daughters go to a Caucasian Church. I feel that I should let them choose what they like to do. My son does not care one way or another, but his wife is from an ardent Buddhist family.

Q. What would like to say to young Japanese-Americans? - I think that it is good for the young to go through hardships although young people today have easy life.

Q. If some Japanese come to the United States as new Issei now, do



you think they will succeed in this country? - I am sure they will if they work hard with the same spirits as we had. I think people today have less patience than older people like us. We endured hardships. We had to work for extremely cheap wage since there was not any other way for us. It was like a competition for patience. Looking back at the past now, the whole thing seems unreal to me. Issei worked really hard, but I guess they could not help it. ~~My first name~~

My first name is Sadame. The Chinese character is one for sadameru (to decide, fix, determine, etc). There is not any special meaning except sadameru. At school people used to call me Sadamu rather than Sadame. Sadame is usually a girl's name. I may be the only male whose name is Sadame. I did not feel ashamed of my name, for my parents chose it for me.